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AUTHOR	Nadel, Jacqueline, Ed.; Butterworth, George, Ed.
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ABSTRACT

Modern research has suggested that imitation is a natural mechanism of learning and communication, yet the possibility of imitation in newborn humans has been controversial. This book looks at evidence for innate imitation in babies. The chapters in the first section of the book reassess the Piagetian tradition, especially concerning the relation between immediate imitation, deferred imitation, and mental representation. Chapters are: (1) "Persons and Representation: Why Infant Imitation Is Important for Theories of Human Development" (Andrew Meltzoff and M. Keith Moore); and (2) "Genesis and Development of Early Infant Mimesis to Facial and Vocal Models" (Giannis Kugiumutzakis). The second section discusses theoretical issues concerned with the ontogeny and phylogeny of imitation. Chapters are: (3) "Neonatal Imitation: Existence, Mechanisms, and Motives" (George Butterworth); and (4) "Evolutionary Foundations of Imitation: Social, Cognitive, and Developmental Aspects of Imitative Processes in Non-human Primates" (Kim Bard and Connie Russell). The third section of the book focuses on the social and emotional motives for imitation in infancy. Chapters are: (5) "What Infants' Imitations Communicate: With Mothers, with Fathers, and with Peers" (Colwyn Trevarthen, Theano Kokkinaki, and Geraldo Fiamenghi, Jr.); and (6) "Imitation as Activity: Its Developmental Aspects" (Ina Uzgiris). The final section of the book explores the value of imitation as a marker for normal and atypical communicative development. Chapters are: (7) "The Evolving Nature of Imitation as a Format for Communication" (Jacqueline Nadel, Caroline Guerini, Ann Peze, and Christine Rivet); (8) "Neonatal Imitation and Imitation among Children with Autism and Down's Syndrome" (Mikael Heimann and Eva Ullstadius); and (9) "An Examination of the Imitation Deficit in Autism" (Sally Rogers). Each chapter contains references. (LPP)

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